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RR RUEHBZ RUEHGI
DE RUEHGI #0014 0301124
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R 301124Z JAN 09
FM AMEMBASSY BANGUI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0824
INFO RUEHBZ/AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE 0111
RUEHJB/AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA 0064
RUEHKH/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM 0214
RUEHLGB/AMEMBASSY KIGALI 0064
RUEHKI/AMEMBASSY KINSHASA 0223
RUEHLC/AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE 0125
RUEHNJ/AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA 0398
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0385
RUEHYD/AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE 0375
RUEHNK/AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT 0001
RUEHGI/AMEMBASSY BANGUI 1015

UNCLAS BANGUI 000014

SIPDIS

YAOUNDE, NDJAMENA FOR PAO; PARIS FOR AFRICA REGIONAL SERVICES;
NOUAKCHOTT FOR PAO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OEXC](#) [ODIP](#) [PREL](#) [CT](#)

SUBJECT: TWO EVENINGS OF MUSIC IN BANGUI

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: AmEmbassy Bangui recently hosted two piano concerts at the Chief of Mission's Residence; one for the Central African Government and international/diplomatic community and one for the small U.S. citizen community in the CAR. Both events were well and enthusiastically attended and highlighted the U.S. Embassy's engagement in the CAR's Political Dialogue and with the small but active resident American community. END SUMMARY

¶2. (U) Last year, a member of the missionary community mentioned to the Ambassador that his organization would be hosting a visit from Dr. William Phemister, a former Fulbright grantee, Julliard graduate, and professor of music at Wheaton College. Phemister has performed extensively overseas and has previously performed under USIS auspices and as the featured classical pianist on the 'Queen Elizabeth 2.' The entire mission immediately seized the opportunity to host two performances - one directed at the host government and international community and another for the U.S. citizens in the CAR. The first concert was held on January 16, 2009 and was attended by some fifty persons. The concert for U.S. citizens was on January 17 and was attended by over forty persons. A cocktail hour at both concerts provided an opportunity to exchange views.

¶3. (U) Phemister's performance included classical works, from composers such as Bach and Brahms, and American music from several eras, including several pieces by ragtime composer Scott Joplin. His technical skills, especially his outstanding dynamics, coupled with interesting and witty commentary assured the full attention from the various audiences, many of whom had never before heard a live performance of classical or American music. During the Joplin selections, every foot in the room was tapping.

¶4. (U) The Ambassador used the closure of each concert to deliver a different, pointed message. Asking the Deputy Minister of Defense (the senior CAR minister at the first concert and son of the CAR President Francois Bozize) to join him at the podium, the Ambassador then noted commended the signing of peace accords between the government and the major rebel groups, the inclusive political dialogue, and, finally, the relevant example of U.S. elections, and urged continued progress towards peace, reconciliation, and development in 2009. Phemister then played the Central African national anthem to the surprised and enthusiastic applause of the audience.

¶5. (U) The message to the U.S. community was more informal - a welcome to the United States Residence - and a reminder to all

to assure that they had completed consular registrations using CA's new on line application, before closing with the U.S. national anthem.

Both concerts were well received, many expressing their surprise at a concert of such quality in Bangui. In fact, many who could not attend continue to lament their absence to the Ambassador as much as a week later.

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